

Maxwell's Crossing

Shelton State Courier's Annual Literary and Fine Arts Publication



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Here comes Santa Claus

Shelton State Community College is sponsoring Here Comes Santa Claus Dec. 2 through December 12.

This special project allows college faculty, students and staff opportunities to work with local service providers in offering assistance to those in need.

Here Comes Santa Claus will benefit the following West Alabama organizations: The Arc, Caring Days, FOCUS on Senior Citizens, Turning Point, West Alabama Aids Outreach, the Good Samaritan Clinic, and the Metro Animal Shelter.

Beginning on Tuesday, Dec. 2, a display of "Santa's bags" were placed in the atriums on both Martin and Fredd campuses. Each bag lists specific requests as well

as instructions for delivery. All donations will be collected at SSCC and distributed according to the assigned organization. Selections can be made anonymously and no contribution is too small!

Here Comes Santa Claus Instructions:

On each Santa Bag, the name of the organization and the needed item(s) are listed.

1. Select the Santa Bag(s) of your choice.

2. Remove the red Santa Bag(s) only from the display board.

3. Purchase the item(s).

4. Follow the delivery instructions on the back of each Santa Bag(s).

If you have questions, contact Channing Howington at 391-2256 or Lisa Waldrop at 391-2959.

Take This Simple Test

A short story by Dave Sandy, Instructor

1. *Do you have small children?*

You're home from the graveyard shift and nursing your second breakfast beer when Dot breaks the news.

"Wayne, I found us a dog."

Just like that your life can change. Even the beer in your mouth goes sour.

"I didn't know we lost one," you try, but Dot stares you down over the lip of her coffee cup—the one with lipstick kisses spelling out the name of the beauty shop she runs out of your speckled brick ranch house. Or used to run—before your three-year-old son died and Dot became the beautician who gave up on beauty. What else do you call a woman who takes to wearing her flamingo housecoat and rabbit slippers all day? Her customers left one by one. Now there's only the lingering scent of hair chemicals and the pink chair with the bubble drier to remind you she was ever in the business.

"Look." She pokes computer photos under your nose. Rat dogs, all of them. In assorted colors—black, white, bone, mahogany. "I took a test," she says. What dog is right for you?

You squint at the photos.

"They're Cairn Terriers," she says. "Like Toto in The Wizard of Oz." You toss the pictures by the vase aquarium where a Siamese fighting fish drifts through the pale roots of a peace lily, his violet fins sheer as Dot's old housecoat.

"Smells like Irene," you say. "She's the only one in the neighborhood with a computer big enough to cause this much trouble."

"Don't go off on Irene," Dot says. "She's broadening our horizons."

"Broadening her butt," you say. "Sticking it into everyone's business. I've seen her at the kitchen window with Johnny's binoculars."

Dot pulls your steaming corn dogs from the microwave and sets them on the table with the jumbo jar of French's mustard.

"Anyway," she says. "A lady in Memphis sells them. Irene even printed us a map." She holds up another sheet of info from Irene's computer. A bright blue line shows the way Irene would have you go.

"How much?" you say.

"Only eight-hundred," she says.

"Jesus," you say. "Does it do the laundry?"

"Less than one of your guns," she says, "and don't even start me on fishing."

You bite the head off your second corn dog. "We're not driving across two states to pay no eight-hundred dollars for no Toto dog."

Dot looks out the kitchen window, past her empty flower box. A hard wind pushes

Little Wayne's teeter-totter against the side of the garden shed. Tap, tap, tap. She turns away.

"Nights are hard, Wayne," she says. "Nights are so hard."

2. *How much are you willing to pay?*

Your battered Dodge truck swims the tailwinds of speeders all the way to Memphis. You follow Irene's map until you find the address, a speckled-brick ranch with a Cairn Terrier on the mailbox. You think about driving off. Why do you need a dog anyway? They're just something you have to care for and you're in no mood for caring. Not yet, anyway.

But then Dot touches your arm.

"Listen," she says. A puppy yelps from somewhere behind the house. "Can you hear our baby?"

"Dot," you say, but she's already running for the carport. Her gray dress flaps at her sides like the wings of a flushed dove. For a second, you wonder if she will take flight. You follow. What else can you do when you have come so far?

A barrel-chested woman with a mustache meets you at the back door, her T-shirt covered with dog hair.

"We've come for the puppy," Dot says.

"You Irene?" Mustache says.

"Friends of Irene," Dot says.

"Thought I was selling to Irene."

"What difference does it make?" you say.

Dot nudges you to keep quiet.

"I don't sell to just anybody," Mustache says.

"You don't think we're good enough to buy your dog?"

Mustache narrows her eyes at you. "You look like a hot head," she says. "I don't sell to hot heads."

You step toward her. You're about to hit your first woman—God help you. But Dot grabs your arm.

"What's his problem?" Mustache says.

"Please," Dot says so loud you both look at her. "The puppy...I promise we'll treat him like our own son. Won't we, Wayne?"

You can't answer. Her promise nails you in the gut. You can only step back and cling to the porch rail.

Mustache lets out a sigh. "All right," she says. "You can come in. Mr. Hot Head can just wait outside."

You're listening to Johnny Cash in the truck and polishing off your third beer from the stash in your toolbox when Dot comes out holding a red pup. He squirms inside her hug. Dot is beaming until she sees your beer. Her face goes dark.

"Wayne, you promised."

"You don't want me to melt out here, do you?"

Continued on page 3...



One of the most anticipated traditions of the college is the annual tree-lighting ceremony accompanied by a Terrific Tuesday Christmas Concert by the Shelton Singers.



She

A poem by Mathew S. Weems, Student

There she comes, the fairy who torments my soul
She sings angelically and smiles cherubic, my emotions are beyond control.
She lives in my dreams. She lives in my eyes.
I can smell the fragments of her hair, please let me die
And I can be free of this torment. My spirit is willing yet not my will to go.

I cannot have her. She cannot have me.
We are separated like Pan from the tree.
Why doth my heart ache? Why can't my brain think?
Why doth my blood flow instead red but of silky pink?
She probably has no time to stop and see me.

I long to be her companion, to be at her side
When troubles tear her world really wide
At her heart. I respect her too much
To allow my sinful lust to crunch
My sense of reasoning and grace abide.

I wish to live my life well and not be concerned
To avoid hearing her voice, seeing her hair, and be cornered.
What is wrong with me? Why do I think of her?
She is out of my reach. Beata Maria, why must it be her?
She's everywhere I look; it cannot be. I am trapped, but I wish not to be concerned.



A 2008 watercolor by Julie O'Connell.

Bottom left: "Marilyn and Audrie," ink by Catherine, Commercial Art student.

THE BLUEBIRD'S PRAYER

By Ernest Metcalf, Student

While checking a bluebird box I had placed just outside a small church I attended; I was surprised to see the neatest, most perfectly built nest I had ever seen. Its neatness was so extraordinary I found myself pondering its little details for two or three days. Finally, I asked God, what, if anything, such a perfectly built nest meant. {And you know, when we ask God for wisdom or insight He delights in giving it to us}. The following thoughts came to me in the form of the mother bluebird's prayer--as God's answer.

"Father, we thank you for this place you have provided for us. It is just perfect for the five little ones you have given us to care for. We take such comfort in knowing that you care for us...that not one of us falls, not even a sparrow without your knowledge. But Father, there is more to this place that makes it special to us than the fact that it is well built...just the right size...well ventilated...facing to there the afternoon sun will not come in too hot on the little ones....covered by a roof that extends in front so the rain will not blow in, and that our home overlooks a nice orchard. All this we appreciate and thank you for. But Father, it is your presence that is so strongly felt here that makes this place so special. I hear songs of praise go up from here and when your people gather together for prayer, which is often, you are here in their midst just as you promised. It is no wonder people are being led by your spirit to come here for ministry and to minister. And Father, we feel that we too are a part of this ministry. That is why we have been so careful to build a perfect nest. Father we want to honor you in the only way we know how and that is, in whatever we do, we do it as unto the Lord, with joy and thanksgiving, moving in all the grace and freedom you give us to be all that we were meant to be in Jesus' name. Amen"

Autumn Embers

A poem by
Marilee
Dinc, Staff
Member



Spring eternal
Fresh and green
Summer days
And children's
dreams
Fall, we face
Autumn embers
Wanting not
We still remember
Broken hearts
Love despairing
Friends are
going
No ones caring
Winter snow
And leafless
trees
Wanting to
dream

Of honey bees
Autumn embers
Always waiting
Time moves on
Needs no dating
Seasons passing
By-gone years
Shedding old
Forgotten tears
Turning around
To look behind
Only to seek
But always to find
Nothing to lose
But still we fear
Autumn embers
Drawing near
It's over now
I'm gone away
But autumn
embers
Are here to stay..

"In February?" she says.

The puppy licks her chin and the smile flickers back to her face.

"His name's Andy. Isn't he something?" she says.

"He pees in my truck, I'll kill him."

3. Are you a giving person?

Next night on the way to the plant you give Carl your side of the matter.

"Besides the manicures, you got to pluck him like a damn chicken," you say. "There's hairballs big as rats all over my porch."

"Least he's not a Poodle," Carl says. "Pooky's saloon visits cost me fifty bucks a pop. Best thing about Fay's leaving was her taking that damn dog with her."

"Irene gave her the dog idea," you say.

"Probably got it from Oprah," Carl says. "Or one of those TV talk shows that turns women into husband-hating Nazis."

"Dot claims she needs the company," you say.

"That's how it starts," Carl says.

"How what starts?" you say.

"Moving you out."

"I don't know if I'd go that far," you say.

Carl sighs and stares ahead at the sweep of headlights slicing through the darkness. In the distance, lightning flickers behind a bank of clouds. Wind whips the pines along the county road. The dusty smell of rain hangs in the air.

"Let me ask you something," Carl says.

"Where you figure the little bastard's sleeping this very minute?"

4. Are you receptive to new routines?

Next morning Dot meets you at the back door with her hair done up like Jacqueline Kennedy, a rainbow of cosmetics across her face.

"We've got a healthy breakfast for you," she says. "Isn't that right, Andy?"

Andy yelps and sniffs your work boot. Dot pushes you into a chair and puts down a steaming bowl of gruel. You look at her. This is not totally unexpected. Last night she packed some kind of cardboard crackers in your lunchbox that you couldn't give away. This morning you found your beer refrigerator in the garage emptied out.

"You need fiber," Dot says.

"I need a beer," you say.

"Honey, don't you think it's time for a change?" She puts down a cup of coffee by the gruel. You can tell from the smell it's not the rotgut Red Diamond you're used to.

"Irene told me about the accident," she says.

You stare at your healthy breakfast.

"She heard from Fay down at the Piggly Wiggly. You nearly dropped a coil on Buster Whatley's head?"

"Nearly don't count," you say.

"But you were drinking," she says.

"No more than usual."

"That's the point," she says. "Ever since Little Wayne died, usual's been unusual."

You hammer the table. The gruel bounces off and explodes across the tile floor. Andy snarls, showing his upper teeth.

"Shut up, Toto."

Dot scoops up his trembling body. "Come on, Andy," she says. "Mister Hot Head wants to kill himself, that's his business. We don't have to

watch."

4. How do you handle the occasional setback?

Next morning you don't even go home. Carl takes you to Lee's Tomb, a beer joint that caters to the night shift. The place reeks of last night's cigarettes. Patsy Cline croons from the jukebox in the corner. Confederate ghosts stare down at you from the walls: there's the maniac horse soldier, Jeb Stuart; the young artillery wizard, John Pelham; and General Lee, himself, who knew a thing or two about losing sons.

You are the only ones in the place except for Big Lyle, the owner, banging away at the grill. You decide to shoot a game of nine ball while you wait on your breakfast burgers.

"You got to do it," Carl Allen says. "For your own survival." He slams home the two ball.

"I don't know," you say. "Whacking a dog seems pretty desperate."

"In case you haven't been paying attention to your life, you are desperate."

"Thanks."

"I'll do it if you want," Carl says. "Toto won't feel a thing and you'll have your life back." Carl scratches on the eight ball. "Damn."

"What do you mean my life back?" you say.

"You know," he says. "Like before."

"Before what?"

"Before you lost Little Wayne and your damn fool mind."

Maybe it's the beer. Or the fact you haven't had breakfast. Maybe it's the graveyard shift that turns your life into a photographic negative--dark for light, light for dark, until you can't trust your own senses any more. All you know is your chest is on fire. You sail your beer bottle across the bar, clamp your arm around Carl's neck and drag his skinny butt over two pool tables. You crack his skull against the blue bubble glass of the jukebox. Carl howls. Shards rain down. Patsy Cline dies.

"He had my name," you say. "Don't you understand? He had my name."

You want to strangle the truth into him but Big Lyle's tattooed arms wrap your chest from behind like blue pythons. They squeeze the fire out of your lungs. You fall back into the current of a black river.

5. How will you handle the eventual death of your new family member?

When you come to, you're lying on the beer-stained floor of the bar. Beside you Carl holds a bloody rag to his forehead. Big Lyle mutters to himself as he sweeps up broken glass. For a moment, you lay there breathing the good air. Then you pick yourself up and tell Carl you're sorry. He waves his bloody rag at you.

"See what helping others gets you in this life?" he says.

"I see enough," you tell him.

The road to the graveyard is a red clay snake but the tires on the Dodge bite and carry you on. The gunmetal sky presses down over the leafless limbs of water oaks lining the road. You finish the six-pack you bought for the road and sail the empties--dead soldiers, you call them--out the window. You imagine quiet explosions in the underbrush. You dodge an empty school bus rocking down the rutted lane, its load already safely delivered. You have your own delivery to make. And then this

mess will be over.

You don't see the angel in time--a man-size statue guarding the gate of the cemetery. You hammer the brakes but the Dodge's front bumper nails her square on. She teeters and falls to one side blocking the entrance to the cemetery. You try to pick her up but you lose your grip and fall face-down into the slick red clay. All you can do is tell her you're sorry and cover her face with your Dale Junior cap.

You pull your Rugger .44 from under the seat and start up the crushed limestone path. As you go, a devil's wind whirls plastic flowers across your steps.

Little Wayne's grave sits by itself at the top of the hill overlooking the Black Warrior River. The only headstone in the lot engraved with a rebel flag and an inscription: Meet you on the Southern Side of Heaven. Little Wayne's #8 NASCAR model still sits at the foot of the gravestone, though the snapshots you left are gone. Little Wayne on his three-wheeler. Little Wayne in camouflage. Little Wayne holding his Louisville Slugger. All blown away with the flowers. Grass hasn't grown over the dimpled clay mound, which shows signs of settling. You dig into the stand of pampas grass beside the grave to find your stashed bottle of Jim Beam. One more soldier to go. You sit down with your back against the cold headstone and take a swallow of the whiskey. A false warmth floods your belly.

"I wasn't vigilant," you say to the stone.

But the stone only gives back your reflection in its polished black marble.

You drain the last of the whiskey and toss the bottle to the edge of the cemetery fence. The .44 seems heavy as you draw down on the slender neck protruding from the weeds. The carved grip stings your hand when you fire. The shot shakes a flock of crows out of a dead water oak. They go crying across the land that rolls down to the turbid water of the Black Warrior.

An answering shot explodes by your head, singeing your neck with dust splintered from the gravestone. A shadow flickers by the cemetery fence. You swing your pistol around to a boy dressed in gray flannel crouching by a fence post. He's maybe all of fifteen with an ancient rifle smoking in his hands. You start to fire but then he smiles back at you with the dark eyes of his mother.

"Little Wayne?" you say.

But he darts off down the fence line. You run after him but your numb legs can not keep up. The limbs of the cemetery dogwoods snatch at your face. You smack your shin on a gravestone, twirl around and the ground falls away. Pain shoots up your leg as you slam into a wall and then a floor of red clay. Flat on your back, the wind knocked out of you, you stare up at your little rectangle of gray sky. You call for your son but there's no answer.

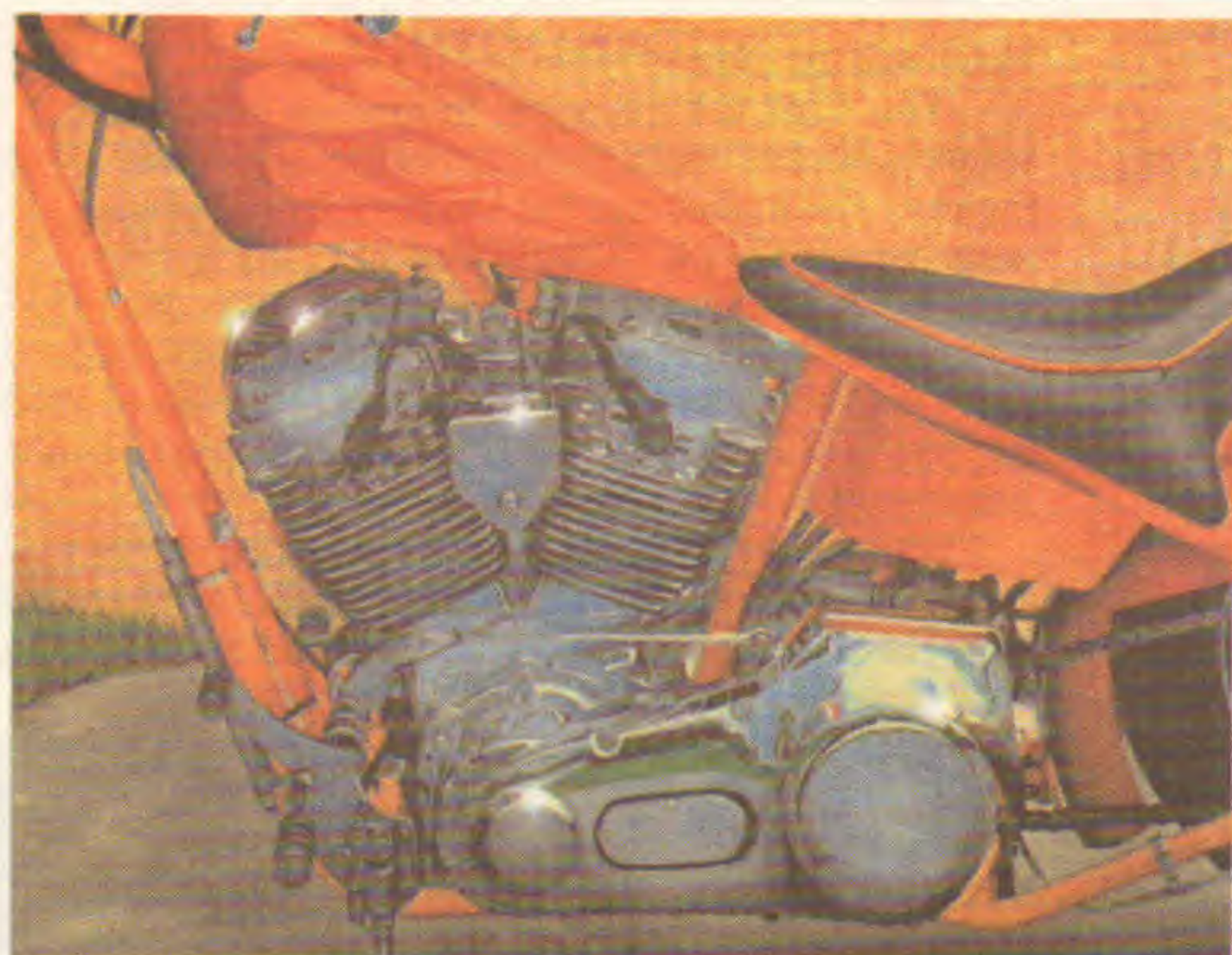
You try to stand but there's pain and the sides of the grave are slippery. Maybe you ought to just lie here, you tell yourself. Save them the trouble of digging another hole.

A shadow crosses your sky. Your hole goes dark. A figure above you stares down, a black man big as God.

"What you doing in my hole?" he says.

"Dying," you say.

Continued on page 5...



Clockwise: "Motorcycle" airbrush by Kyung Cho, Commercial Art student; drawing by Kevin Sanders, student; butterfly drawing by Pam Cole; "Flaming '55," airbrush by Larry McAfee, Commercial Art Instructor

"Dyin' ain't dead," he says. "You come out of there."

"I can't," you say. "Who are you anyway?"

"I'm the man telling you you can't have that hole. That someone else's hole."

He lowers the handle of his shovel. "Grab hold," he says.

You hold on as he lifts you out without even a grunt. He looks at you with eyes of veined marble. You rub your tender knee.

"You the one been drinking by that grave, ain't you? You the one that knocked over my angel and brought that pistol into my yard? Why you come out here and mess with my yard?"

"I'm looking for my

boy," you say. "Have you seen him?"

"I see lots of things, Mister."

"I thought I saw him, but I'm not sure."

"You get on home," he says. "And stay out of

my holes. You not gonna be needing this anymore neither." He holds up your pistol and hurls it toward the river. The stainless barrel glistens like a shooting star.

When you look back, the big guy's gone.

On your way home, rain streaks the front of your windshield. Your wipers only smudge the glass but you sail on certain of your destination. As you turn into the drive you see Dot running out to gather her wash in from the rain. You hobble out to help her. Her thin apron clings to her dress. Her mascara streaks into dark tears at the corner of her eyes. Overhead, a storm cloud streaks by, the dark shadow of something passing.

"I fell," you say to her implied question. "But I'm alright now."

"I lost my boy," she says, her voice almost lost in the rising wind.

"He's okay," you say. "I saw him."

"You saw Andy?"

"Andy?"

"He bolted out the door," she says.

"When I ran to get the wash. Now he's gone." You bend to kiss her stained cheek. She leans her weight against you.

"I'm sorry," she says.

"Don't worry," you say. "We'll find him."

Lightning splits the air above you. Thunder booms like cannon fire. A cry echoes, it seems, from under the ground. Andy bounces out from under the garden shed and dives between your feet. He shakes with fear. You bend down and lift him onto your shoulder. You hold him there, feeling the certainty of his weight. His tiny heart drums against your own chest, a song you are starting to remember.



Above: An acrylic painting by Tonna Saunders, Art Student.

Below: a graphite/color pencil drawing by Shantell Guillen, Art Student



Yellow is the Color of the Sun

A poem by Tammy Anita Rice, Alumna

Yellow is the color of the sun
It will warm the weary
And move the wicked.

When the deep darkness comes
And takes away everything that I have,
And looks me in my eyes
and says so what:
I took it all away from you.
I know it's ok to cry
Because my tears are for many reasons
And many things.

Most of all, my tears are nourishment for my strength.
And the sun came.

Vanguard

A short story excerpt by Codara Cochran, Student

What I'm about to tell you is a great American fairy tale, born from the American dream. I'm your leading man and my story is set in my current location, Los Angeles. Yes, Los Angeles, the city of angels, or as I see it, the city of devils. Or, to be fair, the city of demons, seeing as demons adhere to a lower class of evil than the high lords of the underworld; I don't believe that any man is as wicked as the devil, although man is known to

I arrived in Los Angeles a starry eyed high school graduate, embarking on his college journey. A degree and a career later, I'm now a married man with a daughter, yea, the whole American dream, the house, the car, white fence, and dog; I couldn't ask for more, everything was great. But the past year has been rough, not just for me, but for a majority of Americans, the decline of the economy stripping people of their jobs, their homes, their American dream. Needless to say, the president had worked us over with the same skill and precision of a champ in a title fight. People blamed the banks, blamed the people who took out the loans they were coached into agreeing to,

blamed the government, blamed themselves.

Ironical thing was, I worked for one of the very businesses held responsible for the economy's spiral; I was an accountant at a mortgage firm. I watched people crumble into tears after being told they would lose their homes, heard grown men weep like children on the phone as they pled with me to give them more time because they just lost their job of 30 years. Now don't think my tasks were done without a conscience, my soul was blackened with each morning because I knew I would have to tell a family they would lose their lives. I often imagined what it was like to be one of them, and I feared, like many Americans, that the same could happen to me. One morning I woke up to find my company was bankrupt from the bogus loans it had been slinging. Too bad for me and my family, I was out of a job, and all my stock

was as useless as a broken arm. Funny how the world worked... I went to college, I worked hard, I played by the rules and this is how I am repaid. My wife was already unemployed, so there was no income for my family. My daughter was my highest priority, and I promised to keep her mouth feed, and her body sheltered, so I came up with a desperate plan. I decided to borrow the money from "sources" until I was able to get a new job. These lenders were the very aforementioned demons I spoke of, the movers and shakers, the crime cartel

known as the Vanguard. This mafia of European and Asian drug lords control a large part of Los Angeles, and my asking them for help would turn out to be one of the worst decisions I ever made. They say when times get hard, people get desperate, and when people get desperate, they then get stupid. I can certainly attest to the truth in that statement...

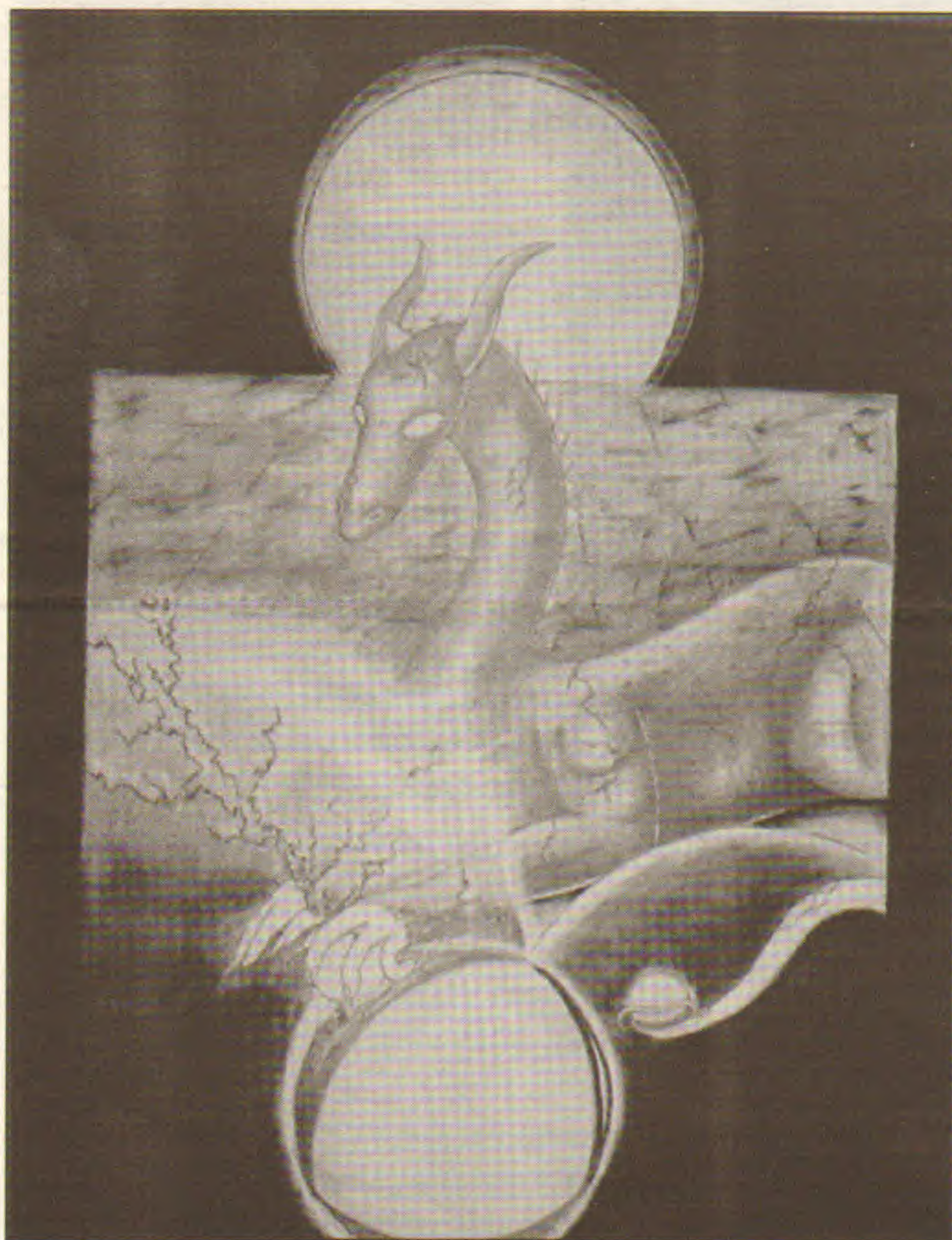
The loan was fine until the Vanguard started pressing me to make payments. Unfortunately I hadn't found a decent enough job to repay them in amounts to their liking. The price of food and gas weren't the only things that had gone up, the price of drugs, and transporting them, had risen as well; and the Vanguard were trying to cover their spending. Even more irony. Now the demons, who are expected to live above the restrictions of us normal mortals, were succumbing to the economy. Just like with the banks, the Vanguard wanted their payments back in full, but unlike banks, the penalty for not paying was outright death. But to make this long introduction short, I came home one day and found my daughter Xandra, and wife, Mitsko were missing. Oh, and to clarify my wife's name, she's Japanese, her parents moved to the states from Kyoto when she was three; don't want to leave you with questions. But, back to the closing of the intro. I came home from an evening of job hunting to find my house empty, my wife and daughter gone. I immediately found it strange because I had just called home thirty minutes ago, and my wife said she was making dinner. I dialed my wife's number on my cell phone, expecting to hear her voice, and an explanation, but a man's voice reverberated through the receiver instead. I cringed, jealous thoughts clawing away at my mind; but I tried not to be that foolish.

"Who is this? Why do you have my wife's phone?" I questioned in a sharp tone of voice. The man replied to me in a smooth tone that slithered like a snake.

"The question is, Mr. Jones, is why do we have your wife and daughter? Oh, wait, you know why. We want our damn money," he said, his words pouring into my ear like a thick acid, eating away at my brain. Yeah, the truth hurt. The pain of the situation soon turned to rage and I yelled into the phone, "Look you sick bastard, you have no right bringing my family into this! Where is my wife and child?!"

"Hey, hey, Mr. Jones, calm down. If you should be mad at anyone, it should be yourself. Now, we can resolve this whole issue if you just bring us the money by tomorrow night," the man paused for a moment, listening for my response, but I remained silent, "We'll be waiting for you at the Kaijin Company building. You have until 12 midnight, or we send their bodies back to you," he finished, hanging up the phone before I could react. I collapsed to my knees, and smothered my face in my hands. What could I do? I didn't have the money... There was no way to get it by tomorrow. For the rest of the night I drank heavily, and on the next day I came to a conclusion and a plan. I called my wife's cell phone again and informed the Vanguard that I would bring them the money, paid in full. ...

This submission also featured depictions of mayhem and vengeance, but we were particularly taken by the set-up for the piece which showed a deft hand, creating portentousness.



A graphite pencil drawing by Tonna Saunders.

attempt the devil's guile. But allow me to trail off from this dissertation of man in favor of explaining myself, and my situation. Firstly, my name is Kentrell, and I'm a 28 year old African American male. Ever since I was a kid I refused to get on the stat sheet of one in three black men rewarded with orange jump suits; and I also encouraged others to avoid the fate by working hard in school, and staying out of the streets. But in reality it is never as easy as those words make it to be. It takes a dedicated soul to take those words as a mantra.

The Reunion

A poem by Don Bell, Staff Member

It's reunion time!
Tell all the dirt.
Who's been a success
And who's lost his shirt.

High school reunion,
A gathering of friends.
Pull out old yearbooks.
Will tall tales never end?
Come, come . . .
Share memories un-penned.

Here come the guys.
Have they led such great lives
That I, instead, should only talk
About my hobby— bee hives?

Most guys' accomplishments
Are about the same:
Marriage, kids, job
And playing the game.

There's old Joe
And Mr. So-and-So
With an overweight wife
And kids in tow.

Hi Joe! How are you?
Is your acne all right?
And how are your eyes,
Are you losing your sight?

Good, acne's gone.
I knew you'd outgrow it
Receding hair line?
You really don't show it.

Hello Marie!
Yes, I can see
You've colored your hair
A fine burgundy.

What have I to tell,
What can I share?
I once took a photo
Of a Yellowstone bear.

My success in life?
Sure, it's there.
I still have
A nice head of hair.

My secret to youth,
My only sin—
The reason I look great
Is Just for Men.

I am a great cook
I'm state-of-the-art.
My secret sauce comes
From a jar at Wal-Mart.

I play a keyboard
Like an energetic pup!

I press on the notes
When the keys light up.
Here are the guys
Discussing guy things—
Weight, thinning hair
And barbeque wings.

Here are the women
Who just seem to know
Who's slept with whom
And who married Joe.

And how many kids
Do you have just now?
And YOU got married
And found a wife somehow?

More talk about weight.
Does anyone care
Who's gained some pounds
Or has thinning hair?

It's reunion time!
Tell all the dirt.
Who's been a success
And who's lost his shirt.

The folks have been talking
And gossiping sore
About who's been a saint
And who's living no more.
(And whom "we" adore,
(And whom "we" deplore.)
(And who we know snores.)

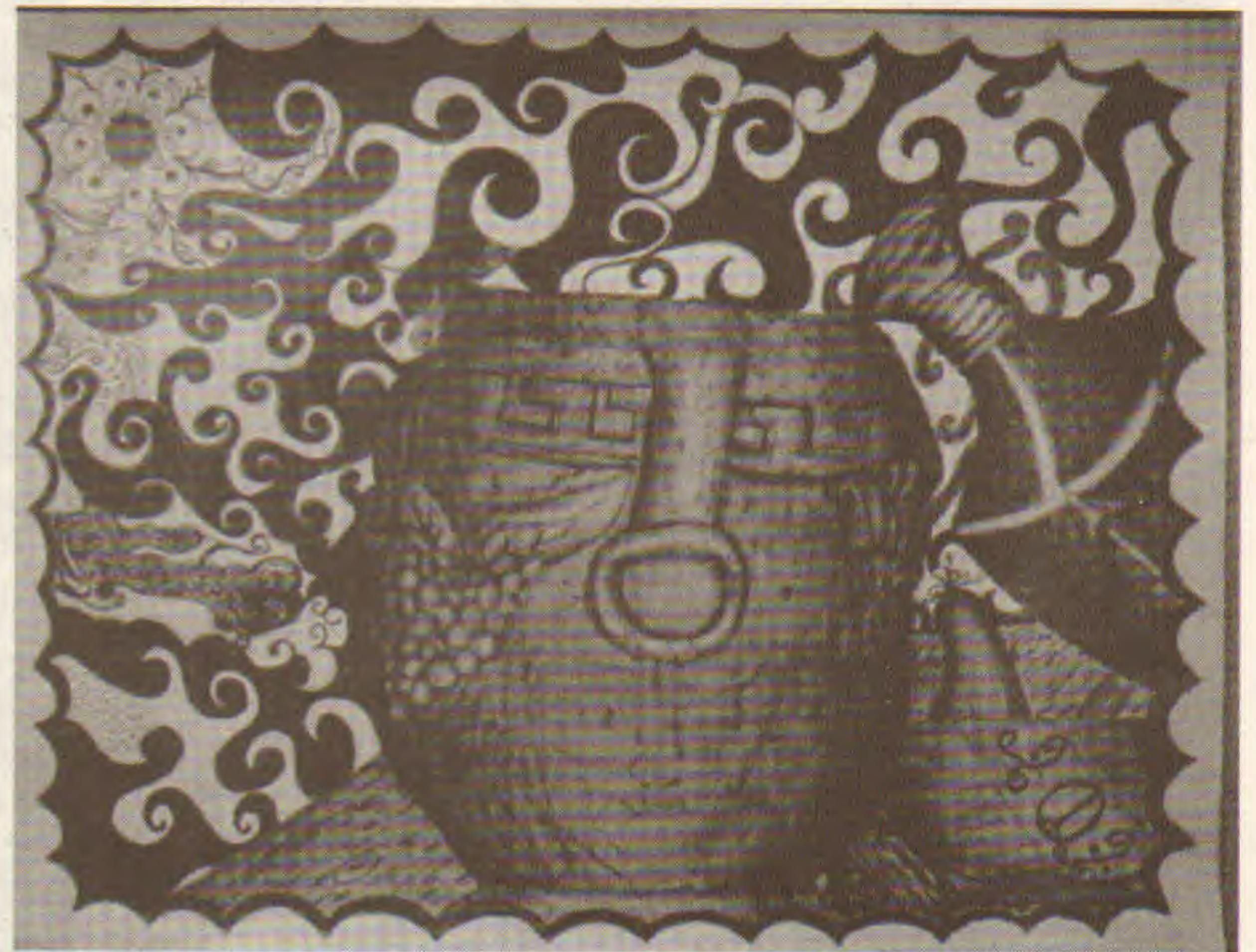
Yes, some of the guys'
Wives say they snore.
Does anyone use Breathe Rite
To open the pore?
And guess what I heard?
Yes, what about this?
To do "you-know-what"
John uses Cialis.

And what about Rosie
With that facial bouquet.
Francine says she uses
Night of Olay.

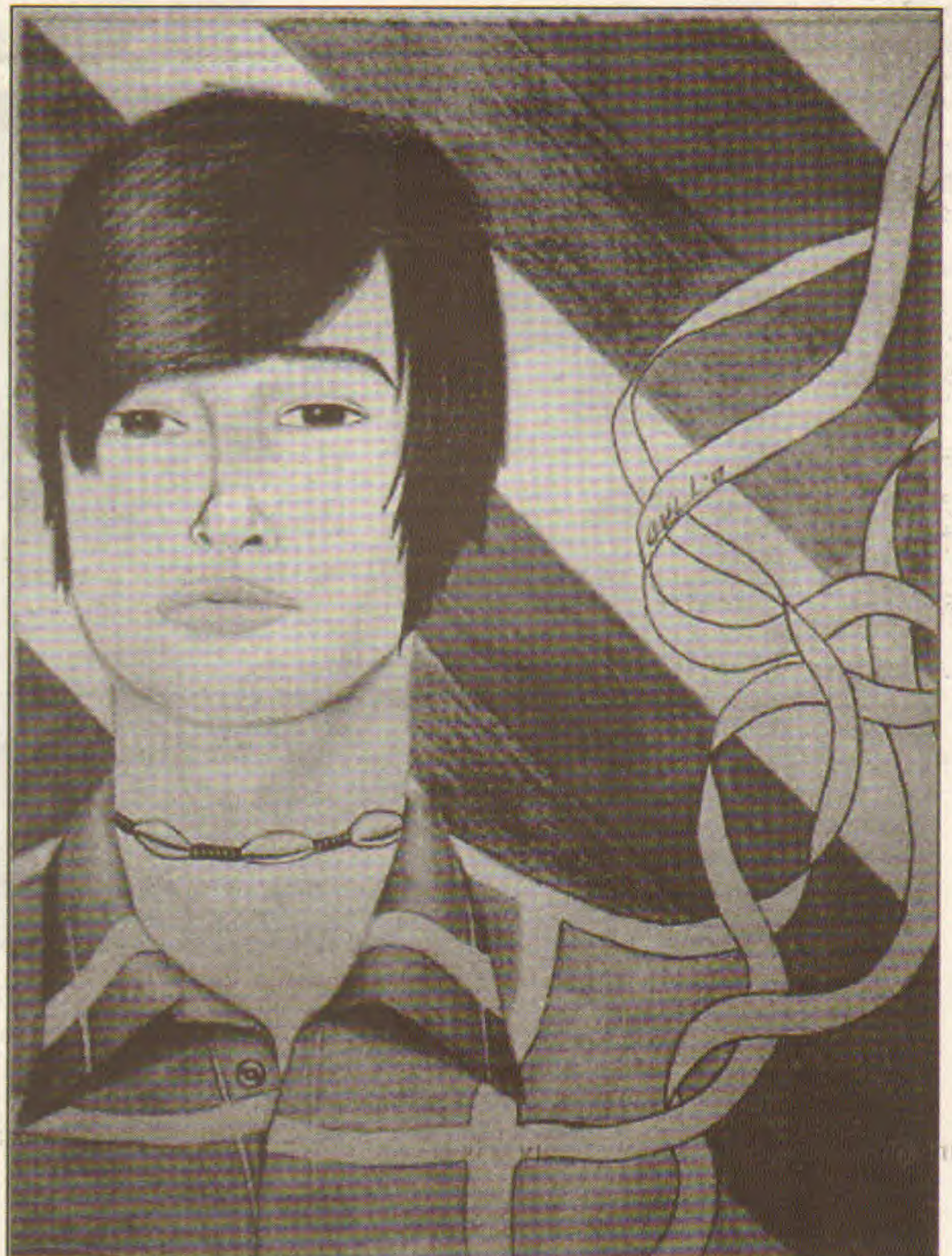
And so goes the talk
Wrinkle creams and E.D. pills.
And weight loss schemes,
And fads and frills.

When the night is over
All are mentally tired.
Friendships are renewed,
New insights acquired.

And as we leave
Someone says
I wonder who'll be here next time
And who'll be dead.
Enough said.



Top: a graphite pencil drawing by Shantell Guillen, Art Student.
Bottom: a graphite/ color pencil drawing
by Joel Hancock, Art Student.





Alecia Williams, Art Student—graphite/ color pencil



Above: Daniel Tingle, Art Student—graphite/color pencil



*Right: "Sundance," prismacolor pencil by Larry McAfee,
Commercial Art instructor.
Above: Hoppy and Partner," prismacolor pencil by Julie,
Commercial Art student.*

